# THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE;

OR

# Literary Miscellany.

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*For the Evening Fire-side.*

## THE PHILANTHROPIST: NO III.

*"Poeta nascitur non fit."*

'Tis Heaven, not Education makes the Poet.

I had prepared an answer to the communication signed "X." but it is superceded by the following letter of my fair correspondent. I shall therefore make no further comments, from the belief that if my friend "X." be yet unconvinced, he is an infidel indeed.

*To the* PHILANTHROPIST.

Upon glancing my eye over the letter signed X, addressed to the Philanthropist, the idea crossed my mind, that the ingenious gentleman had but *partially* viewed his subject;—but perhaps he generously left an opening for some less talented pen to controvert his theory. "That all men are alike capable of great attainments," is a sentiment that will bear much animadversion. Your friend "X." cannot surely suppose that all are equally capable of shining in the *same sphere*, were concurrent circumstances to place them in *precisely* the *same situation*:—many instances might be adduced to prove the fallacy of such a supposition, (granting a favorable ear to all that he can bring forward in disproof of any two individuals being similarly situated). Newton, the celebrated astronomer, by the wonderful concentration of his investigating powers, brought new worlds to view, and explained their various movements, hitherto unknown. Now, this said Newton, had he one spark of gallantry in his composition, would never have taken the lady's finger for a tobacco stopper; on the other hand, how many are the *petit Maitres* of the present day, who can punctiliously practise the etiquette of fashion; yet, were they to bend all their enfeebled powers of mind to any great or important subject, however they might merit approbation for their *wish* to excel, yet woful experience would prove them mere "clods of the valley." I should be sorry to repress emulation; for we know not, till the experiment is made, what are our talents; and many a gem lies buried in the mine, which, if removed from its darkened quarry, would dazzle the world with its brilliancy:—yet, take an adjoining pebble, and polish it till you are tired, and it will never yield a single ray:—No, no; *industry* may do much, but it will never stand in competition with *genius*. "Shew me a man who has devoted his whole life to any *art* or *science*, and I will shew him a *master* in that art or science:" True—the mechanic, who has devoted his whole life to the *pointing* a needle, or *heading* a pin, will undoubtedly do it to perfection; and every mechanic art, if pursued with unwearied assiduity, will of course become perfected: but who is it that introduces novel ideas, and novel plans? Not the plodding mechanic, otherwise the Chinese, with their indefatigable industry, would have shone foremost in the lists of invention and genius; they would no longer deface a whole set of China, by giving each piece a seam in conformity to one, unfortunately in the pattern; nor implicitly follow, when they ought to step into a new path. With our friend "X." I will bring forward the same idea, though in less elegant phrase. "Patience and perseverance will accomplish all things"—that is, in the line of *knowledge*—by persevering toil we may gain every thing, but—genius; we may store our minds with the wisdom of the ancients, and the improvements of the moderns; we may amass a *huge pile*; but, without the talents to arrange it, it will, as Cowper justly observes, be but "*a rude unprofitable mass*; and only *encumber, where it ought to enrich*. Where it is properly arranged, and judiciously distributed for the benefit of mankind, we may quietly read an edifying homily, and give it the praise it deserves; but will it reach the heart? Never, unless genius illumes the page." One fine stroke of native talent will give more of energy and delight, than all the plodding efforts of a self-formed, self-elevated Mentor. 'Tis *nature*—not *art*, gives energy of feeling, and elegance of idea. 'Tis nature—not art, that enchants us in the exquisite tones of harmony, which give us a foretaste of heavenly enjoyments; that delights the eye, in the imitation of natural objects; or enraptures the sense in the sweet flow of poetry.

Which, for instance, of your self-made poets, can charm like a single ray from the SPERMACETI CANDLE that flashes on the feelings, and awakens the soul to rapture; or the syren note of the mischievous ARIEL, who hides himself in bowers of roses, and while he wafts much of gathered sweets, he occasionally brushes his light wing over the hemlock and mistletoe, to empoison the feelings of brother bards, whose works, if not *equal* to his own, are undoubtedly drawn from a source not unowned by the muses.—Without native talent, no exquisite enjoyment can be derived from any production. I cannot think your friend "X." altogether competent to the task he has undertaken;—he has judgment to discriminate between the "precious and the vile," but as nature has kindly lent her lamp to his footsteps, and he is enabled to rise to an equality, perhaps, with many that he admires, he can feel but lightly for those more humbly endowed. This subject recalls to mind an anecdote, related by—I recollect not whom, but related as authentic, of a man in humble life, who, from his earliest existence, betrayed a stupidity wholly impenetrable; by some accident his skull became fractured, and he was subject to terrible fits of lunacy; but in the intervals of those fits, he displayed a genius the most brilliant; a wit the most electric. His company was sought by all circles and all ranks. His talents were almost supernatural; he was equal to every thing;

and it was sorrowful that one so formed for excellence should have his faculties thus obscured by this dreadful malady. His friends exerted their powers for his relief. He was trepanned; a cure was effected; and—he was restored to his original darkness! How shall we account for this phenomenon? how shall we unravel this mystery of nature? where was the education which had called into action these wonderful powers of mind? and if exerted while "reason off her throne" had no influence, why, when restored to her native seat, did she not exert her capacities? Alas! she had none; the etherial spirit, clogged and depressed by her earthly tenement, sunk into torpitude, or glimmered a faint uncertain light. We are so variously constructed, that various as the human features, are the faculties of the human mind. Had your friend "X." contended for an equality of happiness, I had certainly assented; as I fully believe that a good providence has kindly placed happiness equally within reach of all, if they will exert themselves to attain it; but genius and talents have a more limitted distribution. However depressed by circumstance or situation, genius will ever rise buoyant over surrounding obstacles, and will ever, by its brilliancy, gild its retreat, as the sun, however obscured by a dark summer cloud, yet betrays his station in the heavens, by illumining its skirts with gold.

SELINA.

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*For the Evening Fire-side.*

Twelve months after writing some lines on the situation of *Little Neck* and *Pettiquamscott River*, "EMMA" revisited her beloved shades, and found that in her absence the large Rock which topped the cliff, had been thrown from its ancient seat, to the great detriment of this beautiful spot, which occasioned the following:

O say what vagrant dar'd approach this shade?
This solemn grove with impious steps invade!
Dar'd venture where those Rocks tremendous frown,
And rob this Hoary Monarch of his crown?
Did not regret the promis'd sport repel
When from his height his ancient honours fell?
Yes, for the Muse who first these beauties sung,
Who first the Lyre upon these borders strung:
Saw what amazement seiz'd thy hardy soul,
She heard the sigh that from thy bosom stole—
When through these scenes the dire report was spread,
This awe-struck Locust bow'd his listening head;
The trees stood motionless—thy placid wave
O Pettisquamscott! learnt for once to rave:
Along the stream where purest waters flow,
Then ran the thick unsettled stream of woe;
The bending shores sent forth a hollow groan,
And rocks re-echoing join'd the general moan:
Thy parent ocean heard the unwelcome sound,
And dash'd his waves indignant to the ground.
Thy EMMA who in all thy sorrow shares,
Enjoys thy welfare and partakes thy cares;
Who sorrowing, sees thy matchless charms decline,
Joins for this loss her sad regret with thine.

EMMA.

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FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

THE LAYMAN.

*In that day Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim.*—ISAIAH, XI. 13.

Among the many prophecies which foretold the happiness of the gospel day, that which I have chosen for my text deserves particular attention. Would to heaven *that* day were so fully come as to verify the prediction. My readers will no doubt perceive that the terms *Ephraim* and *Judah* are here used as figures, representing the stronger and weaker tribes or parties in the community. Thus, in religious and civil societies, whichever, by their numbers or influence, have attained to pre-eminence, may be compared to Judah, whose tribe, we know, was the strongest in Israel; the weaker, or less popular divisions, are represented by Ephraim, one of the smallest branches of the patriarchal family.

There are certain propensities belonging to human nature, which were undoubtedly implanted there, for benevolent purposes; but which, finding a congenial soil, and growing luxuriantly, become dangerous to our felicity. Of this class, Envy and Malice come particularly under our notice. The *former* pines away in secret, because its neighbor is happy: the *latter* inflicts pain, because it has the power. I have often thought that many of the passions which now bear the names of vices, if they were under the benign controul of Virtue, would deserve a better appellation. Thus, perhaps, Envy would be converted into Emulation; and Malice, once so actively employed in producing misery, by directing her forces to the dissemination of happiness, would deserve the name of Benevolence. But these happy effects can only be expected, where the essential principles of the gospel have obtained the dominion. *There*, and there only, "Ephraim envieth not Judah, and Judah vexeth not Ephraim."

Society is divided into parties; but discord does not necessarily ensue. As long as we are educated under different circumstances, as long as prejudice gives a bias to the judgment, or as long as our capacities to judge are unequal, so long must there be a difference of sentiment on the various subjects that engage our attention. But a difference of sentiment need not to occasion animosity nor confusion. In a well-tuned instrument of music, every string may send forth a different sound, while a combination of the whole shall produce a delightful harmony. CHARITY, that divine harmonizer of the world, teaching us to "think no evil," and to palliate what we discover of error, would banish contention from society, and, in its room, would introduce concord and peace.

The day has happily dawned on the world, when the peaceable religion of the Messiah shall no longer be made a cause of strife; when that sacred language which proclaimed "Peace on earth and good will to men" is more generally understood. But when we turn our eyes on the political world, we find cause to regret that a doctrine, intended to influence every department of the social compact, should be so little regarded. Instead of peace we behold animosity; we see neighborhoods divided and unfriendly. A difference of sentiment on the subject of government, is *now* enough to weaken the bonds of consanguinity, and to make the brother unkind to his brother. This disposition particularly prevails, where the attention is the least engrossed with other subjects. In cities, men are unavoidably led into the company of each other in the transactions of business. Frequent intercourse discovers the amiable qualities of political opponents; blunts the edge of party rancour, and prevents some of its shameful effects: but though this circumstance may operate thus favorably in large towns, yet even there, this evil spirit of division is sensibly felt, and the benevolent mind is pained with the frequent recurrence of political strife. "Ephraim yet envieth Judah, and Judah still vexeth Ephraim."

During the prevalence of a contagious epidemic in our city, I was exiled to a neighboring village. While I was there, the day of election approached; a day "big with the fate of Cæsar, and of Rome"—a day in which every latent spark of party zeal is kindled to a flame. Shortly before the momentous contest, I was one evening in a social company, where a rational conversation on a variety of subjects promised pleasure and instruction; when, unluckily, our old landlord, who was a warm politician, broached his favorite topic. He began by describing the terrible effects that a loss of the election would occasion;

and produced a general gloom, by introducing a dark picture of the anarchy and confusion that would undoubtedly ensue. He carefully enquired into the political characters of his neighbors; and where they differed from his own, he was revenged on them by telling something to their disadvantage, or threatening to withdraw his custom from them. His horses should be shod by some other smith; he would discard his taylor, and employ his shoemaker no more: even his beard should be taken off by some barber who had more regard for his country, than to vote for the political adversary of his employer.

I was astonished to hear such language from a man whom I knew to be a well-wisher to his country; and I was sorry to find that party spirit had so jaundiced his eyes, as to make every dissenter from his own opinions, appear in the dark character of an enemy to society.

That "*every man must have a sentiment*," is a position I readily acknowledge; but a difference of sentiment, so far from being an injury to society, would, if properly regulated, be one of its chiefest blessings. In RELIGION it would promote enquiry, the sure friend of our religious system. In POLITICS it would tend to keep our happy government pure and wholesome. In PHYSICS it would lead to investigation, and in every department of SCIENCE it would urge on to improvement. Let us then discard the narrow views of the partizan and the bigot; and while we seriously investigate each subject of enquiry, and with firmness adhere to the clear discoveries of truth, let us ever with caution judge of those who differ from us in sentiment, and charitably construe the motives of their actions; thus shall we indeed advance that *happy*, that *desirable* day, when "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim;" when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the lion lie down with the kid;" when "none shall hurt or destroy in all this holy mountain;" this sublime elevation above the prejudice of party.

*For the Evening Fire-side.*

TO HOPE. *By a Lady.*

Is soft power! within this tortur'd breast,
No ray of thine with soft effulgence shines;
Long by stern calamity deprest,
My hapless life in wretchedness declines.

From other hearts, though oft thou wing'st thy flight,
Thy parting smiles announce thy swift return;
No parting smile to me e'er gave delight,
Or sooth'd the breast thy absence doom'd to mourn.

Thy airy voice which once was wont to steal,
In soothing whispers o'er this tortur'd heart,
And bid my mind a transient calmness feel,
No longer deigns the fleeting bliss t' impart.

Bereft of thee, thy form forever fled,
Oblivion only can thy loss supply;
But soon this frame shall mingle with the dead,
And cease for thee to heave the hopeless sigh.

*For the Evening Fire-side.*

[The following communication contains some interesting facts which will doubtless command the attention of the meteorologist. It certainly will present to the observer of the changes in our atmosphere some subjects of curious speculation.]

METEOROLOGY.

From Dr. Duffield's thermometrical observations, during the year 1804, it appears that the medial temperature of our climate for that year was 56.44 degrees. The medial Summer heat, (that of the Summer months) was 77.01 degrees; the medial Winter cold, 35.82 degrees; the Spring temperature, 55.25; the Autumnal, 57.35. The medial temperature of the 1st month was, from the same observations, 32.59—of the 2d, 39.31—.3d, 42,93—4th, 55.43—.5th, 67.38—6th, 76.31—7th, 78.84—8th, 75.35—9th, 66.77—10th, 57.03—11th, 48,26—12th, 35,55. Midsummer upon the above data, appears to have been upon the 13th of the 7th mo. 5h. 34 min. P. M. Midwinter, upon the 13th of the 1st mo. at the same hour; mid-spring upon the 13th of the 4th mo. and mid-Autumn, upon the 13th of the 10th mo.

If similar accounts were annually published, it is conceived that from a comparative review of them, divers important advantages would result to the interests of science. Our climate would in time be ascertained, and some light be thrown upon the dark and chaotic field of meteorology. Particularly, by thus registering our seasons as they pass, and noting the average succession of temperate and intemperate seasons, some judgment might be formed from the past, with respect to the future. A corner of our Almanacs might very properly be devoted to such a history of the past year.—Some improvement also in our thermometers, might follow. These, it is conceived, should give us the medial temperature of our own climate, deduced from actual observations; whereas they usually give us that of England. They should also give us the temperature not of the Summer only, but that of the other seasons; the Winter cold, and the vernal and Autumnal temperatures. The temperatures of the several months, could be subjoined; and thus by having the actual state of our climate, we could readily from the thermometer judge of the heat and cold of every month in the year: whilst the Almanacs giving us the same for every day of the year, the same judgment might thence be had, of the relative temperature of the weather, as it occurred.

T.

*For the Evening Fire-side.*

TO SIMON OLIVEBRANCH.

SIMON, I tell thee what it is,
Don't dare again to show thy phiz
At *Fire-side*, where critics throng
Like Mohawk tribe, to chaunt war-song,
And fix upon the mode, or time, or
Place, where they shall scalp a rhymer.
Where wits convene, I can't tell how many,
(The prince of whom is cousin DOMINY)
To hitch up bards, who rashly venture
Among them, on sarcastic tenter;
And many curious stories tell us,
Which prove them mighty hum'rous fellows.
I say thou'dst better keep at bay,
And not again come in their way—
Thou seest how cousin MYRTLE flogs thee,
And with his goad satiric jogs thee.
We see thee when by him assail'd,
With so much ease, like fly, empal'd,
That one would form a supposition,
He'd learnt the trade from old *Domitian*.
There never was, I'm sure, nor now is
A person of such rhyming prowess;
His words "come skelping rank and file,"
And jingle with such little toil,
He could, if we may trust our senses,
Find work for two Amanuenses.
A man with common sense endu'd,
Might see his faculties were good,
The slightest glance upon his profile,
Would satisfy one he was docile—
And 'tis a pity he was not,
More worthy of instruction thought.
If he'd been taught in days of childhood,
To keep his temper in a mild mood,
To know of captiousness the dangers,
And use civility to strangers,—
I say if he had learnt those duties,
And been enamour'd of their beauties,
Had not such hatred of all show,
Of what *be* happens not to know,
He would be much the better for it,
And might be one day Poet Laureat.
In short, except a *chance* ill practice,
He *Homo est ad unguem factus.*

And therefore, SIMON, 'tis a folly
To strive against the man of *Holly*.—
Of such as thee 'twould take a dozen,
To beat, at rhyme, my witty cousin.
'Tis vain those Latin scraps t' insert,
They frighten him much more than hurt.
*What language 'tis*, from some kind men
He quickly learns, and then, and then,
Ah! *then* his humor's worthy noting,
He says *'tis Latin* thou art quoting!
Shun, SIMON, shun th' unequal contest,
For MYRTLE's cause will sure come on best.
In *paper strife* I know my cousin
A Hero is, if e'er there was one.
Can't thee perceive his wit ineffable,
Where he relates the tale, so laughable,
About thy ride on poor old Dobbin,
Lent thee by thy kind neighbour *Robbin?*
I do suspect his powers did fright thee,—
If thee *'an't* scar'd, I'm sure thee *might* be!
Thou hast no slight at feats equestrian,
'Twere better far to turn pedestrian;
Relinquish all parnassian cattle,
For on their backs thee surely sat ill;—
I know from sight, as well as hearsay,
That thou didst drive them without mercy.
Therefore if thou dost wish to shun
My Cousin's queer dry jokes, and fun,
I once more tell thee how to do it—
*Foot it*, my friend, or else thee'll rue it.

My sentiments, freely I speak 'em,
My advice I request thee to follow—
For *thee*, SIMON, "*jam tempus equum*
"*Fumantia solvere colla*"

SYLVESTER LAUREL.

*Timber Creek, New-Jersey,*
*January 17th*, 1806.

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*For the Evening Fire-side.*

ANONYMOUS, TO CRITO.

In assigning to merit its due share of praise, we do nothing but our duty; yet the act of justice is invariably followed by pleasing sensations. Thus, CRITO, I feel considerable satisfaction in acknowledging the excellence of the first and last sentences of thy *review upon the reviewers*. It is true, the rest is not quite so good, bearing some resemblance to those barrels of herring in which the trickish Yankees are said to strew a layer or two of good fish at the bottom and top, while the space between is filled with miserable stuff. But how many pieces of composition are there where the good natured critic can find not a single sentence to applaud; not one layer of good! Now, over these thou hast a most undoubted right to a preference, which I am by no means inclined to dispute. There are, however, some things in thy "review," which require to be controverted. The "American Letters" are as far from needing my assistance as they are beyond thy feeble assault; but how could I hear the poor ci-devant Editors charged with *ignorance*, *partiality*, and *want of judgment*, without wishing to remove the imputation?

It is well observed, "that the greatest care should be taken in the consideration of an American production, to judge with candor." But, in order to do this, is it necessary to consider what "an European would pronounce on the subject? Are *they* the sole possessors of this amiable quality? Many years have not elapsed since the prevailing notion in Europe was, that civilized America was inhabited by half-savages; and it was the employment of many of their philosophers to prove that the air we breathe had a degenerating influence upon the constitution both of mind and body. Even when the rapid improvement of the arts and sciences, and the advancement of literary taste are conspicuous among the sons of America, the European, accustomed to his prejudices, gives a tardy and meagre assent to our pretensions to rank among the enlightened nations. Surely, then, it is not from him an American author may expect to be conducted to the temple of fame! To qualify a person to form a correct judgment of the writings of another, much preparation is necessary. His reading should be extensive; he should possess a standard of taste in his own mind, and *should have perused the work he designs to criticise*. Without these requisites will he not in vain attempt to square the merit of a writer by the "plain rules laid down by Blair?" What would we think of a merchant's clerk, who, when a complex account was offered him for settlement, should turn over Dilworth's Assistant to know what rule he should do it by? Would we not question the skill of a captain, who, in sailing for China, should depend upon keeping in the wake of some gallant ship, instead of employing his own compass and log-book? Is not his conduct precisely similar who lays aside his own impressions of propriety in order to follow the "plain rules laid down by Blair?"

There yet remains to be noticed two or three *little* errors which really surprized me as coming from one so correct as CRITO—ought to be.

1st. I cannot find that the "Literary Notice" alluded to has said a word in praise or dispraise of the *style* of the "American Letters." CRITO censures only the *style*, and thinks that is sufficient to prove the incorrectness of the criticism! "Who could have anticipated" this? Or is there any precedent for it to be found in "the first principles laid down by Blair?"

2d. CRITO has doubtless *read* Dr. Blair, perhaps *read him through*; but it is not equally clear that he understands him. The Doctor, aware of the imperfection of language, and knowing that the plainest rules may be misapplied, has introduced a number of examples to assist the judgment. In speaking of the unity of a sentence, the Doctor certainly did not mean it should be confined to *one object*: (for, if every stock or stone was to claim a sentence to itself, how prolix would descriptive language become!) but that we should avoid grouping together things which would perplex the mind by intricacy, or disgust it by incongruity; this rule should be observed not only in the formation of single sentences, but also in their concatenation. As a neglect of this rule, the Doctor gives us the following instance: "In this uneasy state both of his public and private life, Cicero was oppressed by a new and cruel affliction, the death of his beloved daughter Tullia; which happened soon after his divorce from Dolabella, whose manners and humor were entirely disagreeable to her. The subjunction of Dolabella's character," the Doctor observes, "is foreign to the main object; and breaks the unity and compactness of the sentence totally, by setting a new picture before the reader." Now let us examine whether the sentence which CRITO has quoted from the "American Letters" is liable to a similar censure.

"Sometimes, at high noon, in pensive "guise, we wandered along the double "rows of lime-trees that border the junc "tion of the Sill and the Limmat, and "cast a night of shade upon the tomb of "Gessner the pastoral poet, who was "buried, at his own request, in one of the "thickets of the grove."

Where does this disgust by incongruity, or perplex by intricacy? ANONYMUS has not the most comprehensive of human understandings, yet he easily perceives that the traveller beheld, *at one view*, the junction of the Sill and Limmat, the double rows of lime-trees, and the tomb of Gessner; neither did it require a great stretch of fancy to suppose him bending over the stone which marked the place where the pastoral poet lay to read that he was buried there at his

own request. All the objects here presented invite the mind to musing: how then can they be said to break the *unity* of the sentence? Or what reader of taste wishes to see it cut up and formed into two or three sentences, by the introduction of some uninteresting nominatives, &c.?

3d. Does CRITO perfectly comprehend the meaning of the words which he uses himself? He charges the poor sentence above quoted with "redundance in style," because there is compressed into one sentence what he thinks ought to have been dilated into two or three! "I will say nothing" against his use of the term *bathos*; for in one sense of the word he is right. *Bathos* means *low*, and in the tomb, the remains of Gessner, the pastoral poet, were doubtless laid *full low*, yet some lovers of the muses are foolish enough to think this very circumstance may give *rise* to some *sublime contemplations!*

*O blundering brother of the bathos bench*, let me greet thee kindly: perhaps thou mayest find as many absurdities in my hasty scrawl as have manifested themselves in thine; but certainly I am not guilty of that *redundancy of style* by which the meaning of three sentences is compressed into one; nor did I ever sink so low into the *bathos* as to introduce into rural scenery the sad memento of a sublime pastoral poet. Such "*violation of the plain rules laid down by Blair*" was reserved for the author of the AMERICAN LETTERS.

CRITO, let thy own words give thee instruction: judge with candour, lest thou commit thy judgment. Read a book before thou passest sentence upon it, for the hearsay of others may lead thee astray. Remember that unqualified censure is at least as bad as unqualified praise; and that as "original works are comparatively rare" in this country, we ought not to withhold from them any commendation which they justly merit.

ANONYMUS.

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*Selected for the Evening Fire-side.*

Each creature's link'd to that below it,
All nature if observ'd will show it:
And upwards still our search will prove,
Each creature link'd to that above.
Heaven when it had created Man,
Unfinish'd found creation's plan;
Tho' Men and Angels were akin,
A chasm still appear'd between,—
Nor would the links together meet,
Till Woman made the chain complete.

## SPECTRES.

*(Concluded.)*

3d. Spectres are sometimes also occasioned by opium. Gassendi, the philosopher, found a number of people going to put a man to death for having intercourse with the devil; a crime which the poor wretch readily acknowledged. Gassendi begged of the people that they would permit him first to examine the wizard before putting him to death.—They did so; and Gassendi, upon examination, found that the man firmly believed himself guilty of this impossible crime. He even offered to Gassendi to introduce him to the devil. The philosopher agreed; and when midnight came, the man gave him a pill, which he said it was necessary to swallow before setting off. Gassendi took the pill, but gave it to his dog. The man having swallowed his, fell into a profound sleep; during which he seemed much agitated by dreams. The dog was affected in a similar manner. When the man awoke, he congratulated Gassendi on the favorable reception he met with from his sable highness. It was with difficulty Gassendi convinced him that the whole was a dream....the effect of soporific medicines, and that he never stirred from one spot during the whole night.

4th. That diseases, especially the night-mare, the hypochondria, hysteric passion, and madness, are another source of spectres, we have the strongest reasons to affirm. Persons subject to night-mare often imagine that they see spectres. This is still more the case with hypochondriac and hysteric persons, and those who are in any degree deranged in their intellects. A fact which fell within the observation of the writer of this article will both prove and illustrate this assertion. In a village in one of the midland counties of Scotland, lived a widow distinguished among her neighbors for decency of manners, integrity, and respect for religion. She affirmed, that for several nights together she had heard a supernatural voice exclaiming aloud, *murder! murder!* This was immediately reported through the neighborhood: all were alarmed, and looked around them with solicitude for the detection of the murder which they supposed to have been committed; and it was not long till a discovery seemed actually to be made. It was reported that a gentleman who had relations at no great distance, and who had been residing in the West-Indies, had lately arrived with a considerable fortune; that he had lodged in an inn about three miles off; and that he had afterwards been seen entering a house in the village where the widow lived, from which he had never returned. It was next affirmed, that a tradesman passing the church-yard about twelve o'clock at midnight had seen four men carry a dead corpse into that cemetery. These three facts being joined together seemed perfectly to agree, and to confirm one another, and all believed some horrible murder had been committed. The relations of the gentleman thought they were called upon to make enquiry into the truth of these allegations. They accordingly came first to the church-yard, where, in company with the sexton, they examined all the graves with great care, in order to discover whether any of them had been lately dug, or had the appearance of containing more than one coffin. But this search was to no purpose, for no alteration had been made upon the graves. It was next reported that the murdered man had been buried in a plantation about a mile distant from the village. As the alarm was now very general, a number of the inhabitants proposed of their own accord to explore it. They accordingly spread themselves over the wood, and searched it with care, but no grave nor new dug earth was found. The writer of this article, who was then a boy at school, was along with them. The matter did not rest here: The person who was said to have seen four men carry a dead corpse into the church-yard at midnight was summoned to appear before a meeting of the justices of the peace. Upon examination he denied any knowledge of the affair, but referred the court to another person from whom he had received his information. This person was examined, and the result was the same as the former: In short, one person had heard it from another, who had received it from a third, who had heard it from a fourth; but it had received a little embellishment from every person who repeated it. It turned out to be the same with Smollet's story of the three black crows, which somebody was said to have vomited.

Upon enquiry at the inn where the West Indian gentleman had lodged, no such gentleman had been seen there;—It was found afterwards he had never left the West-Indies. Still, however, the veracity of the widow was not disputed; and some dark and secret transaction was

suspected. But the whole affair was at length explained, by discovering that she was somewhat deranged by melancholy; and the cries which she had at first imagined she had heard were afterwards imitated by some roguish person, who was highly amused with spreading terror among the credulous.

5th. Drunkenness also has the power of creating spectres. Its natural effect in most cases is to derange the understanding, to throw it off its guard, and to give full scope to that passion which has a natural disposition to gain an ascendency; and sometimes it excites passions which scarcely seem to exist at any other time. It makes some men licentious, some furious, some all benevolence and kindness, some from being cowards it renders undaunted heroes. It seldom, if ever, excites fear; and therefore it may be thought strange that men should imagine they see ghosts when intoxicated. But it must be remarked, that the ghost which the drunkard sees, he sees not with the same alarm and terror as men who are sober. He is not afraid of them. He has the courage to converse with them, and even to fight with them, if they give him provocation. A man returning home intoxicated, affirmed that he had met with the devil; and that, after a severe encounter, he had vanquished him and brought him to the ground, to which he had nailed him fast by driving his staff through his body. Next morning the staff was found stuck with great violence into a heap of turfs!

6th. Many apparitions of spectres have no other origin than the artifices of the waggish or self-interested. Dr. Plot, on his natural history of Oxfordshire, relates a marvellous story, which will illustrate this assertion. Soon after the murder of King Charles Ist, a commission was appointed to survey the King's house at Woodstock, with the manor, park, woods, and other demesnes, to that manor belonging; and one Collins, under a feigned name, hired himself as secretary to the commissioners; who, upon the 13th of October, 1694, met, and took up their residence in the King's own rooms. His majesty's bed chamber they made their kitchen—the council hall their pantry, and the presence chamber was the place where they sat for the dispatch of business.

His majesty's dining room they made their wood-yard and stored it with the wood of the famous royal oak from the High Park, which, that nothing might be left with the name of *king* about it, they had dug up by the roots, and split and bundled up into faggots for their firing. Things being thus prepared, they sat on the 16th of the same month for the dispatch of business; and in the midst of their first debate there entered a large black dog, (as they thought) which made a dreadful howling, overturned two or three of their chairs, and then crept under a bed and vanished. This gave them the greater surprise, as the doors were kept constantly locked, so that no real dog could get in or out. The next day their surprise was increased, when, setting at dinner in a lower room, they heard plainly the noise of persons walking over their heads, though they well knew the doors were all locked, and there could be nobody there. Presently after they heard also all the wood of the King's oak brought by parcels from the dining room, and thrown with great violence into the presence chamber; as also all the chairs, stools, tables, and other furniture, forcibly hurled about the room; their papers, containing the minutes of their transactions, were torn, and the ink glass broken. When all this noise had ceased, Giles Sharp, their Secretary, proposed to enter first into these rooms; and, in presence of the commissioners, from whom he received the key, he opened the doors, and found the wood spread about the room, the chairs tossed about and broken, the papers torn, the ink glass broken, (as has been said); but not the least track of any human creature, nor the least reason to suspect one, as the doors were all fast, and the keys in the custody of the commissioners. It was therefore unanimously agreed, that the power who did this mischief must have entered the room at the key-hole. The night following, Sharp, the Secretary, with two of the commissioners' servants, as they were in bed in the same room, which room was contiguous to that where the commissioners lay, had their bed's feet lifted up so much higher than their heads, that they expected to have their necks broken, and then they were let fall at once with so much violence as shook the whole house, and more than ever terrified the commissioners. On the night of the 19th, as all were in bed in the same room for greater safety, and lights burning by them, the candles in an instant went out with a sulphureous smell, and that moment many trenchers of wood were hurled about the room, which next morning were found to be the same their honors had eaten on the day before, which were all removed from the pantry, though not a lock was found opened in the whole house. The next night they still fared worse;—The candles went out as before; the curtains of their honors' beds were rattled to and fro with great violence; their honors received many cruel blows and bruises, by eight great pewter dishes and a number of wooden trenchers being thrown on their beds, which being heaved off, were heard rolling about the room, though in the morning none of these were to be seen. This night, likewise, they were alarmed by the tumbling down of oaken billets about their beds, and other frightful noises; but all was clear in the morning as if no such thing happened. The next night the keeper of the King's house and his dog lay in the commissioners' room, and then they had no disturbance. But on the night of the 22d, though the dog lay in the room as before, yet the candles went out, a number of brick-bats fell from the chimney into the room, the dog howled piteously, their bed-clothes were all sttipped off, and their terror increased. On the 24th they thought all the wood of the King's oak was violently thrown down by their bed sides; they counted sixty-four billets that fell, and some hit and shook the beds in which they lay; but in the morning none were found there, nor had the door been opened where the billet wood was kept. The next night the candles were put out, the curtains rattled, and a dreadful crack, like thunder, was heard; and one of the servants, running in haste, thinking his master was killed, found three dozen of trenchers laid smoothly under the quilt by him. But all this was nothing to what succeeded afterwards:—The 29th, about midnight, the candles went out; something walked majestically through the room, and opened and shut the windows; great stones were thrown violently into the room, some of which fell on the beds, others on the floor; and at about a quarter after one a noise was heard, as of forty cannon discharged together, and again repeated at about eight minutes distance. This alarmed and raised all the neighborhood; who, coming into their honors' room, gathered up the great stones, four score in number, and laid them by, in the corner of a field, where, in Dr. Plot's time, who reports this story, they were to be seen. This noise like the discharge of cannon, was heard through all the country for

sixteen miles round. During these noises, which were heard in both rooms together, the commissioners and their servants gave one another over for lost, and cried out for help; and Giles Sharp, snatching up a sword, had well nigh killed one of their honors, mistaking him for the spirit, as he came in his shirt from his own room to theirs. While they were together, the noise was continued, and part of the tiling of the house was stripped off, and all the windows of an upper room were taken away with it.—On the 30th, at midnight, something walked into the chamber, treading like a bear; it walked many times about, then threw the warming pan violently on the floor; at the same time a large quantity of broken glass, accompanied with great stones and horses' bones, came pouring into the room with uncommon force. These were all found in the morning to the astonishment and terror of the commissioners, who were yet determined to go on with their business. But on the 1st of November the most dreadful scene of all ensued: candles in every part of the room were lighted up, and a great fire made: at midnight, the candles all yet burning, a noise like the bursting of a cannon was heard in the room, and the burning billets were tossed about by it even into their honors' beds; who called Giles and his companions to their relief, otherwise the house had been burnt to the ground: about an hour after the candles went out as usual, the crack, as of many cannon, was heard, and many pailfulls of green stinking water were thrown upon their honors' beds. Great stones were also thrown in as before; the bed-curtains and bed-steads torn and broken; the windows shattered, and the whole neighborhood alarmed with the most dreadful noises: Nay, the very rabbit-stealers that were abroad that night in the warren were so terrified that they fled for fear and left their ferrets behind them. One of their honors, this night, spoke, and, *in the name of God, asked what it was, and why it disturbed them so?* No answer was given to this; but the noise ceased for awhile, when the spirit came again; and as they all agreed, *brought with it seven devils worse than itself.* One of the servants now lighted a large candle, and set it in the door-way between the two chambers, to see what passed; and as he watched it, he plainly saw a hoof striking the candle and candlestick into the middle of the room, and afterwards making three scrapes over the snuff, scraped it out. Upon this the same person was so bold as to draw a sword; but he had scarce got it out when he felt another invisible hand holding it too, and pulling it from him; and at length prevailing, struck him so violently on the head with the pummel, that he fell down for dead with the blow. At this instant was heard another burst like the discharge of the broadside of a ship of war, and at about a minute or two's distance each, no less than nineteen more such: these shook the house so violently, that they expected every moment it would fall upon their heads. The neighbors, on this, being all alarmed, flocked to the house in great numbers, and all joined in prayer and psalm-singing; during which the noise still continued in the other rooms, and the discharge of cannons was heard as from without, though no visible agent was seen to discharge them.

But what was the most alarming of all, and put an end to their proceedings, effectually, happened the next day as they were all at dinner, when a paper, in which they had signed a mutual agreement to reserve a part of the premises out of the general survey, and afterwards to share it equally among themselves, (which paper they had hid for the present under the earth in a pot in one corner of the room, and in which an orange tree grew), was consumed in a wonderful manner, by the earth's taking fire with which the pot was filled, and burning violently with a blue fume and an intolerable stench; so that they were all driven out of the house, to which they could never be again prevailed upon to return.

This wonderful contrivance was all the invention of the memorable Joseph Collins, of Oxford, otherwise called *Funny Joe*, who having hired himself as secretary under the name of *Giles Sharp*, by knowing the private traps belonging to the house, and the help of *pulvis fulminans* and other chemical preparations, and letting his fellow servants into the scheme, carried on the deceit without discovery to the very last; insomuch that the late Dr. Plot, in his natural history, relates the whole for fact, and concludes in this grave manner: "That, though tricks have been often played in affairs of this kind, many of the things above related are not reconcileable with juggling; such as the loud noises, beyond the power of man to make, without such instruments as were not there; the tearing and breaking the beds; the throwing about the fire; the hoof treading out the candle; the striving for the sword, and the blow the man received from the pummel of it."

[*Encyclopædia.*]

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### A WOMAN'S SMILE.

On earth there's nothing worth possessing,
Or can the ills of life beguile,
Without that dearest, sweetest blessing,
The magic of a WOMAN'S SMILE.

The glare of wealth, the pomp of fame,
Are senseless treasures, joyless, vile,
Are bawbles wite a splendid name,
Without the charm of WOMAN'S SMILE.

The noxious clouds of motley care,
That thicken round our joys awhile,
Like morning mist, dissolve in air
Before the beams of WOMAN'S SMILE.

How sweet the sun's bright beam must be,
After long night to Zembla's isle!
But oh! much sweeter far to me,
The sunshine of a WOMAN'S SMILE!

Then place me, Fate, where'er you may,
'Mid dreary waste, or savage isle;
For o'er my soul no gloom can stray,
While I am blest with WOMAN'S SMILE.

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### ANECDOTE OF WASHINGTON.

The English papers seize every occasion to do justice to the Heroes, Statesmen, and Patriots of the United States. The London Courier of the 30th October, contains the following Anecdote; which we do not recollect to have ever before seen:—

One Rueben Rouzy, of Virginia, owed the General about 1000*l.* While President of the United Statec, one of his agents brought an action for the money; judgment was obtained, and execution issued against the body of the defendant, who was taken to jail. He had a considerable landed estate, but this kind of property cannot be sold in Virginia for debts, unless at the discretion of the person. He had a large family, and for the sake of his children preferred lying in jail to selling his land. A friend hinted to him that probably Gen. Washington did not know any thing of the proceeding, and that it might be well to send him a petition, with a statement of the circumstances. He did so, and the very next post from Philadelphia, after the arrival of his petition in that city, brought him an order for his immediate release, together with a full discharge, and a *severe reprimand* to the agent for having acted in such a manner.

Poor Rouzy was in consequence restored to his family, who never laid down their heads at night without presenting prayers to Heaven for their "beloved Washington." Providence smiled upon the labours of the grateful family, and, in a few years, Rouzy enjoyed the exquisite pleasure of being able to lay the 1000*l.* with interest at the feet of this truly great man. Washington reminded him that the debt was discharged: Rouzy replied, the debt of his family to the father of their country and preserver of their parent, could never be discharged; and the General, to avoid the pleasing importunity of the grateful Virginian, who would not be denied, accepted the money—only, however, to divide it amongst Rouzy's children, which he immediately did.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

*Messieurs Editors,*

The great advantages and disadvantages attendant on the art of printing, are so many and obvious, that they scarcely escape the attention of any reflecting mind. The different opinions entertained on this subject, have given rise to much contention, and considerable ingenuity has been displayed, in the arguments advanced by the advocates of one side and the other. There is a third class, who incline to neither of the others, from a belief that the evils and benefits resulting from the invention of this art, are nearly equi-ponderant. It is much to be regretted by every friend to mankind, that the utility of this discovery, which promised such beneficial consequences to the whole human race, by diffusing the light of science, and the benign doctrines of christianity in regions of superstition and darkness, should be liable to be called in question, because, like every other good thing, it may be, and is, abused.

The best purpose to which the press can be applied, is in endeavoring to harmonize the discordant and tumultuous passions of our nature; by inculcating the precepts of morality and virtue, and by dispelling the thick clouds of ignorance which unfortunately envelop so large a portion of the globe. On the other hand, it is most injurious, when made an engine to corrupt the mind by disseminating the poisons of modern philosophy, which is synonimous with infidelity; and when it is the medium through which hatred, envy, and malice can gratify their fiend-like dispositions, by aspersing with foul calumnies the characters of the good and great. Subordinate to these effects, are those consequent upon there being so wide a field opened for authors to display their talents and ingenuity; from the proper or improper direction of which, much good or evil flows: for I believe they have much greater influence in the concerns of the world, than most people commonly imagine. When such apply their own labours for our instruction; or endeavor to form a correct taste by manly and liberal criticism; by investigating and ushering into notice the merits of others, and when, in their capacity of public censors, they judge with candor and condemn without prejudice, many important benefits may accrue to society. The reverse of this is too often the case. Illiberality taking the place of impartiality, and dignified with the name of criticism, often delight to confound in indiscriminate censure, the views and efforts of those, who endeavor to contribute to the amusement or improvement of the public.

A writer in your last paper, under the signature of "CRITO," has occasioned these remarks. What his motives were in writing such a piece, and offering it to the consideration of others, I am unable to divine; but surely it is not designed as a criticism on the "American Letters," which he acknowledges he has never read: if it is, he has most unfortunately committed both his "judgment" and his "candor," by hazarding an opinion of the merits of a work of considerable length, merely from reading a few pages. He seems aware in some measure of this objection, by admitting that his remarks are only applicable to the first letters. Of these, however, he speaks in terms of unqualified censure, and says, he is "informed by those who have perused it throughout," that similar blemishes to that he has pointed out, "frequently present themselves." Are not such observations calculated to make an impression unfavorable to the publication in question? and if it is agreed to be, as I think it must, the object CRITO had in view, will not his readers be convinced, that he was influenced by some other motive in his remarks (for I will not call them a criticism) than a jealousy, lest the genius of our country should be lessened in the eyes of Europeans by the "American Letters" being "suffered to go forth into the world, as a standard of American taste, or a specimen of national talents." The book I have never read; to defend it, therefore, is not my intention: it may abound with beauties or absurdities, for ought I know. I mean only to object against the hypercritical conduct of CRITO, in finding fault with a review, written by those who had considered maturely the subject of their remarks, and consequently were much better qualified to give an opinion relative thereto than himself. No person is better pleased than myself with dispassionate criticism; but I think the observations of him, who declares that his opinions were fixed by a partial perusal of a book, no more merits to be called so, than the dreams of a physiognomist, deserve the name of infallible oracles of truth.

Y.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALFRED's poetical favour, unfortunately came too late for insertion this week. It shall grace our next number.

NED SURFACE poſſeſſes merit, but his communication needs a reviſion, and we think deſerves it.

PETTACUS, and A PROJECTOR, in our next.

PHILANTHROPY's proſe and poetry, have proceeded in due courſe from our *Letter Box* to the *pigeon-hole*—hand in hand.

TABITHA STARCH-BACK is recommended to clear-ſtarch her morals, before ſhe again ventures to the Evening Fire-ſide.

THEOPHILUS is too juvenile for inſertion; but we do not think him deſtitute of ability.

It was with ſome reluctance we conceived ourſelves neceſſitated to condemn DOMINIE BEARWELL to the pigeon-hole of oblivion.

We are at a loſs what to think of VERATUS's preſent communication. If he thinks the editors of the Evening Fire-ſide are ſo ſilly as to publiſh his ſelections of old ſongs as original, he is miſtaken; if he is himſelf impoſed on, we pity his ignorance.

SOLOMON GUNDY, thy wiſdom is conſummate, thy taſte delicate and diſcriminating, thy politeneſs unobjectionable, and thy wiſhes we hope, will in due time be realized.

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